

The Twelve Rosary Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII

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| 1. Supremi apostolatus officio | 1 September 1883 |
| 2. Superiore anno | 30 August 1884 |
| 3. Quod auctoritate | 22 December 1885 |
| 4. Vi è ben noto | 20 September 1887 |
| 5. Octobri mense | 22 September 1891 |
| 6. Magnae Dei Matris | 8 September 1892 |
| 7. Laetitiae sanctae | 8 September 1893 |
| 8. Iucunda Semper Expectatione | 8 September 1894 |
| 9. Adiutricem populi | 5 September 1895 |
| 10. Fidentem Piumque Animum | 20 September 1896 |
| 11. Augustissimae Virginis Mariae | 12 September 1897 |
| 12. Diuturni Temporis | 5 September 1898 |

(10) FIDENTEM PIUMQUE ANIMUM

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII
ON THE ROSARY

To Our Venerable Brethren, The Patriarchs, Primates, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries Enjoying Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Health and the Apostolic Blessing.

We have already had the opportunity on several occasions during Our Pontificate of bearing public testimony to that confidence and devotion towards the Blessed Virgin which We imbibed in Our tenderest years, and have endeavored to cherish and develop all our life long. For, having fallen upon times of calamity for Christendom and perils for the nations, We have realized how prudent it is to warmly recommend this means of safe-guarding happiness and peace which God has most mercifully granted to Mankind in His August Mother, and which hath ever been celebrated in the annals of the Church. The manifold zeal of Christian people has responded to Our desires and exhortations, most particularly in exciting a devotion to the Rosary; and a plentiful harvest of excellent fruits has not been wanting. Still we can never be satisfied with celebrating the Divine Mother, who is in truth worthy of all praise, and in urging love and affection towards her who is also the mother of mankind, who is *full of mercy, full of grace*. Yea, Our soul, wearied with the cares of the Apostolate, the nearer it feels the time of Our departure to be at hand, with the more earnest confidence looks up to her from whom, as from a blessed dawn, arose the Day of happiness and joy that was never to set. It is pleasant to us to remember, Venerable Brethren, that We have in other letters issued from time to time extolled the devotion of the Rosary; for it is in many ways most pleasing to her in whose honour it is employed, and most advantageous to those who properly use it. But it is equally pleasant to be able now to insist upon and confirm the same fact. Herein we have an excellent opportunity to paternally exhort men's minds and hearts to an increase of religion, and to stimulate within them the hope of eternal reward.

Necessity of Prayer

2. The form of prayer We refer to has obtained the special name of "Rosary," as though it represented by its arrangement the sweetness of roses and the charm of a garland. This is most fitting for a method of venerating the Virgin, who is rightly styled the *Mystical Rose* of Paradise, and who, as Queen of the universe, shines therein with a crown of stars. So that by

its very name it appears to foreshadow and be an augury of the joys and garlands of Heaven offered by her to those who are devoted to her. This appears Clearly if we consider the nature of the Rosary of Our Lady. There is no duty which Christ and His Apostles more emphatically urged by both precept and example than that of prayer and supplication to Almighty God. The Fathers and Doctors in subsequent times have taught that this is a matter of such grave necessity, that if men neglect it they hope in vain for eternal salvation. Every one who prays finds the door open to impetration, both from the very nature of prayer and from the promises of Christ. And we all know that prayer derives its chief efficacy from two principal circumstances: perseverance, and the union of many for one end. The former is signified in those invitations of Christ so full of goodness: *ask, seek, knock* (Matt. vii., 7), just as a kind father desires to indulge the wishes of his children, but who also requires to be continually asked by them and as it were wearied by their prayers, in order to attach their hearts more closely to himself. The second condition Our Lord has born witness to more than once: *If two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them* (Matt. xviii. 19, 20). Hence that pregnant saying of Tertullian: *Let us gather into an assembly and congregation that we may, as it were, make up a band and solicit God* (Apologet. c. xxxix): *such violence is pleasing to God*; and the memorable words of Aquinas: *It is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard, if one prayer is made up as it were out of many supplications.* (In Evang. Matt. c. xvii). Both of these qualities are conspicuous in the Rosary. For, to be brief, by repeating the same prayers we strenuously implore from Our Heavenly Father the Kingdom of His grace and glory; we again and again beseech the Virgin Mother to aid us sinners by her prayers, both during our whole life and especially at that last moment which is the stepping-stone to eternity. The formula of the Rosary, too, is excellently adapted to prayer in common, so that it has been styled, not without reason, "The Psalter of Mary." And that old custom of our forefathers ought to be preserved or else restored, according to which Christian families, whether in town or country, were religiously wont at close of day, when their labors were at an end, to assemble before a figure of Our Lady and alternately recite the Rosary. She, delighted at this faithful and unanimous homage, was ever near them like a loving mother surrounded by her children, distributing to them the blessings of domestic peace, the foretaste of the peace of heaven. Considering the efficacy of public prayer, We, among other decrees which we have from time to time issued concerning the Rosary, have spoken thus: "It is Our desire that in the principal church of each diocese it should be recited every day, and in parish churches on every feast-day (Apostolic Letter *Salutaris Ille*, 24th December, 1883). *Let this be constantly and devoutly carried out. We also see with joy the custom extended on other solemn occasions of public devotion and in*

pilgrimages to venerated shrines, the growing frequency of which is to be commended. This association of prayer and praise to Mary is both delightful and salutary for souls. We ourselves have most strongly experienced this - and Our heart rejoices to recall it - when at certain times in Our Pontificate We have been present in the Vatican basilica, surrounded by great crowds of all classes, who united with Us in mind, voice, and hope, earnestly invoked by the mysteries and prayers of the Rosary, her who is the most powerful patroness of the Catholic name.

Christ the one Mediator: Position of the Saints and Especially of Mary

3. And who could think or say that the confidence so strongly felt in the patronage and protection of the Blessed Virgin is excessive? Undoubtedly the name and attributes of the absolute Mediator belong to no other than to Christ, for being one person, and yet both man and God, He restored the human race to the favor of the Heavenly Father: *One Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all* (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). And yet, as the Angelic Doctor teaches, *there is no reason why certain others should not be called in a certain way mediators between God and man, that is to say, in so far as they co-operate by predisposing and ministering in the union of man with God* (Summa, p. III, q. xxvi., articles 1, 2). Such are the angels and saints, the prophets and priests of both Testaments; but especially has the Blessed Virgin acclaim to the glory of this title. For no single individual can even be imagined who has ever contributed or ever will contribute so much towards reconciling man with God. She offered to mankind, hastening to eternal ruin, a Saviour, at that moment when she received the announcement of the mystery of peace brought to this earth by the Angel, with that admirable act of consent *in the name of the whole human race* (Summa. p. III, q. xxx., art. 1). She it is *from whom is born Jesus*; she is therefore truly His mother, and for this reason a worthy and acceptable "Mediatrice to the Mediator." As the various mysteries present themselves one after the other in the formula of the Rosary for the meditation and contemplation of men's minds, they also elucidate what we owe to Mary for our reconciliation and salvation. No one can fail to be sweetly affected when considering her who appeared in the house of Elizabeth as the minister of the divine gifts, and who presented her Son to the Shepherds, to the kings, and to Simeon. Moreover, one must remember that the Blood of Christ shed for our sake and those members in which He offers to His Father the wounds He received, *the price of our liberty*, are no other than the flesh and blood of the virgin, *since the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary, and however much it was exalted in the glory of His resurrection, nevertheless the nature of His flesh derived from Mary remained and still remains the same* (de Assumpt. B. V. M., c.v., among the Opera S. Aug).

Divine Faith and the Rosary

4. Yet another excellent fruit follows from the Rosary, exceedingly opportune to the character of our times. This we have referred to elsewhere. It is that, whilst the virtue of Divine Faith is daily exposed to so many dangers and attacks, the Christian may here derive nourishment and strength for his faith. Holy writ calls Christ the *Author and finisher of faith* (Heb. vii. 2), the Author, because He taught men many things which they had to believe, especially about Himself in whom *dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead* (Colos. ii., 9), and also because He mercifully gives the power of believing by the grace and, as it were, the function of the Holy Ghost; the *Finisher*, because in Heaven, where He will change the habit of faith into the splendour of glory, He openly discloses to them those things which they have seen in this mortal life as through a veil. Now Christ stands forth clearly in the Rosary. We behold in meditation His life, whether His hidden life in joy, or His public life in excessive toil and sufferings unto death, or His glorious life from His triumphant resurrection to His eternal enthronement at the right hand of the Father. And since faith, to be full and sufficient, must display itself, - for with the heart we believe unto justice, but *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Rom. x., 10), - so have we also in the Rosary an excellent means unto this, for by those vocal prayers with which it is intermingled, we are enabled to express and profess our faith in God, our most watchful Father; in the future life, the forgiveness of sins; in the mysteries of the august Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the Divine Maternity, and others. All know the value and merit of faith. For faith is just like a most precious gem, producing now the blossoms of all virtue by which we are pleasing to God, and hereafter to bring forth fruits that will last for ever: *for to know Thee is perfect justice, and to know Thy justice and Thy power is the root of immortality* (Wisdom xv., 3). It is here the place to add are mark respecting the duties of those virtues which faith rightly postulates. Among them is the virtue of penance, and one part of this is abstinence, which for more reasons than one is necessary and salutary. It is true the Church is growing more indulgent towards her children in this matter, but they must understand they are bound to take all care to make up for this maternal indulgence by other good works. We rejoice for this reason also to propose particularly the use of the rosary, which is capable of producing worthy fruits of penance, especially by the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ and His Mother.

5. To those therefore who are striving after supreme happiness this means of the Rosary has been most providentially offered, and it is one unsurpassed for facility and convenience. For any person even moderately instructed in his religion can make use of it with fruit, and the time it occupies cannot delay any man's business. Sacred history abounds with striking and evident examples. It is well known that there have been many persons occupied in most weighty functions or absorbed in laborious cares who have never omitted for a single day this pious practice. Combined with this advantage is that inward sentiment of devotion which

attracts minds to the Rosary, so that they love it as the intimate companion and faithful protector of life; and in their last agony they embrace and hold fast to it as the dear pledge of *the unfading Crown of glory*. Such a pledge is greatly enhanced by the benefits of *sacred indulgences*, if properly employed; for the devotion of the Rosary has been richly endowed with such indulgences by both our Predecessors and Ourselves. These favours will certainly prove most efficacious to both the dying and the departed, being bestowed as it were by the hands of the merciful Virgin, in order that they may the sooner enjoy the eternal peace and light they have desired.

Prayer for the Re-Union of Christendom

6. These considerations, Venerable Brethren, move us incessantly to extol and recommend to Catholic peoples this excellent and most salutary form of devotion. Yet another very urgent reason, of which we have often spoken both in Letters and Allocutions, encourages us to do this. For that earnest desire, which we have learnt from the Divine Heart of Jesus, of fostering the work of reconciliation among those who are separated from Us daily urges Us more pressingly to action; and we are convinced that this most excellent Re-union cannot be better prepared and strengthened than by the power of prayer. The example of Christ is before us, for in order that His disciples *might be one* in faith and charity, he poured forth prayer and supplication to His Father. And concerning the efficacious prayer of His most holy Mother for the same end, there is a striking testimony in the Acts of the Apostles. Therein is described the first assembly of the Disciples, expecting with earnest hope and prayer the promised fullness of the Holy Spirit. And the presence of Mary united with them in prayer is specially indicated: *All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus* (Acts i., 14). Wherefore as the nascent church rightly joined itself in prayer with her as the patroness and most excellent custodian of Unity, so in these times is it most opportune to do the same all over the Catholic World, particularly during the whole month of October, which we have long ago decreed to be dedicated and consecrated, by the solemn devotion of the Rosary, to the Divine Mother, in order to implore her for the afflicted Church. Let then the zeal for this prayer everywhere be re-kindled, particularly for the end of Holy Unity. Nothing will be more agreeable and acceptable to Mary; for, as she is most closely united with Christ she especially wishes and desires that they who have received the same Baptism with Him may be united with Him and with one another in the same faith and perfect charity. So may the sublime mysteries of this same faith by means of the Rosary devotion be more deeply impressed in men's minds, with the happy result that "we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise."

7. Meanwhile, as a pledge of the Divine Favours and Our affection, We most lovingly impart to You, your clergy and People, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's in Rome, September 20, 1896, in the 19th year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII

(11) *AUGUSTISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE*

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII

ON THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE HOLY ROSARY

To Our Venerable Brethren, The Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries having Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Health and the Apostolic Blessing.

Whoever considers the height of dignity and glory to which God has raised the Most August Virgin Mary, will easily perceive how important it is, both for public and for private benefit, that devotion to her should be assiduously practiced, and daily promoted more and more.

Mary's Place in the Incarnation and Redemption

2. God predestined her from all eternity to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word, and for that reason so highly distinguished her among all His most beautiful works in the triple order of nature, grace and glory, that the Church justly applies to her these words: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures" (Ecclus. xxiv., 5). And when, in the first ages, the parents of mankind fell into sin, involving their posterity in the same ruin, she was set up as a pledge of the restoration of peace and salvation. The Only-begotten Son of God ever paid to His Most Holy Mother indubitable marks of honour. During His private life on earth He associated her with Himself in each of His first two miracles: the miracle of grace, when, at the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in the womb of Elizabeth; the miracle of nature, when He turned water into wine at the marriage - feast of Cana. And, at the supreme moment of His public life, when sealing the New Testament in His precious Blood, He committed her to his beloved Apostle in those sweet words, "Behold, thy Mother!" (John xix., 27).

We Must Follow Christ's Example

3. We, therefore, who, though unworthy, hold the place of Vicar of Christ upon earth, shall never cease to promote the glory of so great a Mother, as long as life endures. And since, as old age draws on apace, We feel that life cannot now last much longer, We are constrained to repeat to each and all of our beloved children in Christ those last words of His upon the Cross, left to us as a testament, "Behold, thy Mother!" Greatly rewarded indeed shall We be, if Our

exhortations succeed in making even one of the faithful hold nothing dearer than devotion to Mary; so that those words which St. John wrote about himself may be applied to each, "the disciple took her to his own" (Ibid.).

4. As the month of October again approaches, Venerable Brethren, We would not willingly leave you without Our letters this year, also once more urging you with all possible earnestness to strive by the recitation of the Rosary to aid both yourselves individually, and the Church in her need. This form of prayer appears, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to have been wonderfully developed at the close of the century, for the purpose of stimulating the lagging piety of the faithful. This is witnessed by the splendid churches and much-frequented sanctuaries of the Mother of God. To this Divine Mother we have offered the flowers of the month of May; to her we would have also fruit-bearing October dedicated with especial tenderness of devotion. It is fitting that both parts of the year should be consecrated to her who said: "My flowers are the fruit of honour and riches" (Ecclus. xxiv., 23).

Modern Tendency to Association

5. The natural tendency of man to association has never been stronger, or more earnestly and generally followed, than in our own age. This is not at all to be reprehended, unless when so excellent a natural tendency is perverted to evil purposes, and wicked men, banding together in various forms of societies, conspire "against the Lord and against His Christ" (Ps ii., 2). It is, however, most gratifying to observe that pious associations are becoming more and more popular among Catholics also. They are frequently formed; indeed, all Catholics are so closely drawn" together and united by the bonds of charity, as members of one household, that they both may be and are truly styled brethren. But if the charity of Christ be absent, none may glory in the name and fellowship of brethren. So wrote Tertullian long ago in pungent words: "We are your brethren by right of a common mother, nature, yet are ye less than men, because unnatural brothers. How much more justly are they called and esteemed as brethren who acknowledge one and the same Father, God; who have drunk in one and the same spirit of charity; who have been borne from one and the same womb of ignorance into the one light of truth?" (Apolog. c. xxxix.)

Usefulness of Catholic Associations

6. There are many reasons for Catholics joining useful associations of this kind. We include in these clubs, popular savings-banks, recreative classes, associations for the care of youth, sodalities, and many other organizations for excellent purposes. All these, though from their name, constitution, and special ends, apparently of modern invention, are in reality of great antiquity. Traces of societies of this kind are to be found even in the earliest ages of

Christianity. In later ages they were legally approved, distinguished by special emblems, enriched with privileges, associated with divine worship in the Churches, or devoted to works of spiritual or corporal mercy, and at different epochs known under different names. Their numbers increased to such an extent, especially in Italy, that no city or town, nay scarcely any parish, was without one or more of them.

The Rosary Sodality: Its Excellence

7. We do not hesitate to assign a pre-eminent place among these societies to that known as the Society of the Holy Rosary. If we regard its origin, we find it distinguished by its antiquity, for St. Dominic himself is said to have been its founder. If we estimate its privileges, we see it enriched with a vast number of them granted by the munificence of our predecessors. The form of the association, its very soul, is the Rosary of Our Lady, of the excellence of which We have elsewhere spoken at length. Still the virtue and efficacy of the Rosary appear all the greater when considered as the special office of the Sodality which bears its name. Everyone knows how necessary prayer is for all men; not that God's decrees can be changed, but, as St. Gregory says, "that men by asking may merit to receive what Almighty God hath decreed from eternity to grant them" (Dialog., lib. i., c. 8). And St. Augustine says, "He who knoweth how to pray aright, knoweth how to live aright" (In Ps. cxviii). But prayers acquire their greatest efficacy in obtaining God's assistance when offered publicly, by large numbers, constantly, and unanimously, so as to form as it were a single chorus of supplication; as those words of the Acts of the Apostles clearly declare wherein the disciples of Christ, awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost, are said to have been "persevering with one mind in prayer" (Acts i., 14). Those who practice this manner of prayer will never fail to obtain certain fruit. Such is certainly the case with members of the Rosary Sodality. Just as by the recitation of the Divine Office, priests offer a public, constant, and most efficacious supplication; so the supplication offered by the members of this Sodality in the recitation of the Rosary, or "Psalter of Our Lady," as it has been styled by some of the Popes, is also in a way public, constant, and universal.

Special Efficacy of Public Prayer

8. Since, as We have said, public prayers are much more excellent and more efficacious than private ones, so ecclesiastical writers have given to the Rosary Sodality the title of "the army of prayer, enrolled by St. Dominic, under the banner of the Mother of God," - of her, whom sacred literature and the history of the Church salute as the conqueror of the Evil One and of all errors. The Rosary unites together all who join the Sodality in a common bond of paternal or military comradeship; so that a mighty host is thereby formed, duly marshalled and arrayed, to repel the assaults of the enemy, both from within and without. Wherefore may the members

of this pious society take to themselves the words of St. Cyprian: "Our prayer is public and in common; and when we pray, we pray not for one, but for the whole people, for we, the entire people, are one" (De Orat. Domin.). The history of the Church bears testimony to the power and efficacy of this form of prayer, recording as it does the rout of the Turkish forces at the naval battle of Lepanto, and the victories gained over the same in the last century at Temesvar in Hungary and in the island of Corfu. Our predecessor, Gregory XIII, in order to perpetuate the memory of the first-named victory, established the feast of Our Lady of Victories, which later on Clement XI distinguished by the title of Rosary Sunday and commanded to be celebrated throughout the universal Church.

Difference Between Prayer to God and to the Saints: An Objection Answered

9. From the fact that this warfare of prayer is "enrolled under the name of the Mother of God," fresh efficacy and fresh honour are thereby added to it. Hence the frequent repetition in the Rosary of the "Hail Mary" after each "Our Father." So far from this derogating in any way from the honour due to God, as though it indicated that we placed greater confidence in Mary's patronage than in God's power, it is rather this which especially moves God, and wins His mercy for us. We are taught by the Catholic faith that we may pray not only to God himself, but also to the Blessed in heaven (Conc. Trill. Sess. xxv.), though in different manner; because we ask from God as from the Source of all good, but from the Saints as from intercessors. "Prayer," says St. Thomas, "is offered to a person in two ways—one as though to be granted by himself; another, as to be obtained through him. In the first way we pray to God alone, because all our prayers ought to be directed to obtaining grace and glory, which God alone gives, according to those words of Psalm lxxxiii., 12, "The Lord will give grace and glory." But in the second way we pray to holy angels and men, not that God may learn our petition through them, but that by their prayers and merits our prayers may be efficacious. Wherefore, it is said in the Apocalypse (viii., 4): "The smoke of the incense of the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel" (Summa Theol. 2a tae, q. lxxxiii. a. iv.). Now, of all the blessed in heaven, who can compare with the august Mother of God in obtaining grace? Who seeth more clearly in the Eternal Word what troubles oppress us, what are our needs? Who is allowed more power in moving God? Who can compare with her in maternal affection? We do not pray to the Blessed in the same way as to God; for we ask the Holy Trinity to have mercy on us, but we ask all the Saints to pray for us (Ibid.). Yet our manner of praying to the Blessed Virgin has something in common with our worship of God, so that the Church even addresses to her the words with which we pray to God: "Have mercy on sinners." The members of the Rosary Sodality, therefore, do exceedingly well in weaving together, as in a crown, so many salutations

and prayers to Mary. For, so great is her dignity, so great her favour before God, that whosoever in his need will not have recourse to her is trying to fly without wings.

Union of Prayer and Work with the Angels

10. We must not omit to mention another excellence of this Sodality. As often as, in reciting the Rosary, we meditate upon the mysteries of our Redemption, so often do we in a manner emulate the sacred duties once committed to the Angelic hosts. The Angels revealed each of these mysteries in its due time; they played a great part in them; they were constantly present at them, with countenances indicative now of joy, now of sorrow, now of triumphant exultation. Gabriel was sent to announce the Incarnation of the Eternal Word to the Virgin. In the cave of Bethlehem, Angels sang the glory of the new-born Saviour. The Angel gave Joseph command to fly with the Child into Egypt. An Angel consoled, with his loving words, Jesus in His bloody sweat in the garden. Angels announced His resurrection, after He had triumphed over death, to the women. Angels carried Him up into Heaven; and foretold His second coming, surrounded by Angelic hosts, unto whom He will associate the souls of the elect, and carry them aloft with Him to the heavenly choirs, "above whom the Holy Mother of God is exalted." To those, therefore, who make use of the pious prayers of the Rosary in this Sodality, may be well applied the words with which St. Paul addressed the new Christians: "You are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of Angels" (Heb. xii., 22). What more divine, what more delightful, than to meditate and pray with the Angels? With what confidence may we not hope that those who on earth have united with the Angels in this ministry will one day enjoy their blessed company in Heaven?

The Popes and the Rosary Sodality

11. For these reasons the Roman Pontiffs have ever given the highest praise to this Sodality of Our Lady. Innocent VIII. calls it "a most devout confraternity" (Splendor Paternae Glorise, Feb. 26, 1491.) Pius V. declares that by its virtue "Christians began suddenly to be transformed into other men, the darkness of heresy to be dispelled, and the light of Catholic faith to shine forth" (Consueverunt Romani Pontifices, September 17, 1569). Sixtus V, noting how fruitful for religion this Sodality was, professed himself most devoted to it. Many others, too, enriched it with numerous and very special indulgences, or took it under their particular patronage, enrolling themselves in it and giving it many testimonies of their goodwill.

Concluding Exhortation

12. We also, Venerable Brethren, moved by the example of Our predecessors, earnestly exhort and conjure you, as We have so often done, to devote special care to this sacred

warfare, so that by your efforts fresh forces may be daily enrolled on every side. Through you and those of your clergy who have care of souls, let the people know and duly appreciate the efficacy of this Sodality and its usefulness for man's salvation. This We beg all the more earnestly as of late that beautiful devotion to our Blessed Mother, called "the living Rosary," has once more become popular. We have gladly blessed this devotion, and We earnestly desire that you would sedulously and strenuously encourage its growth. We cherish the strongest hope that these prayers and praises, rising incessantly from the lips and hearts of so great a multitude, will be most efficacious. Alternately rising by night and by day, throughout the different countries of the earth, they combine a harmony of vocal prayer with meditation upon the divine mysteries. In ages long past this perennial stream of praise and prayer was foretold in those inspired words with which Ozias in his song addressed Judith: "Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord, the Most High God, above all women upon the earth... because He hath so magnified thy name this day that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of man." And all the people of Israel acclaimed him in these words: "So be it, so be it!" (Judith xiii., 23, 24, 26).

13. Meanwhile, as a pledge of heavenly blessings, and a testimony of Our paternal affection, We lovingly impart to You, in the name of the Lord, Venerable Brethren, and to all the clergy and people committed to your faithful care, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, on the 12th day of September, 1897, in the 20th year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII

(12) *DIUTURNI TEMPORIS*

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII

ON THE ROSARY

To Our Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries having Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

Looking back over the long space of time, which by God's Will We have passed in the Supreme Pontificate, We cannot but acknowledge that, in spite of Our demerits, We have enjoyed the most singular protection of Divine Providence. This We believe must be attributed principally to the united, and therefore most efficacious, prayers, which, as of old for St. Peter, so now also for Ourselves, are constantly being poured forth by the Universal Church. Wherefore We first of all give profound thanks to God, the Giver of all good things, and we shall continue as long as life lasts to cherish in mind and heart gratitude for each and every favor. And next, there comes to Our mind the sweet remembrance of the motherly protection of the august Queen of Heaven; and this memory likewise We shall cherish and preserve inviolate, ever thanking her and proclaiming her benefits. From her, as from an abundant spring, are derived the streams of heavenly graces. "In her hand are the treasures of the mercies of the Lord" (St. John-Damascene, Sermon I. on the Nativity of the blessed Virgin). "God wisheth her to be the beginning of all good things" (St. Irenaeus, Contra Valen., J. iii., cap. 33). In the love of this tender mother, which We have constantly striven to cherish and to grow in day by day, We confidently hope that We may end Our life.

Summary of Preceding Encyclicals on the Rosary

2. We have long desired to secure the welfare of the human race in an increase of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, as in a powerful citadel, and We have never ceased to encourage the constant use of the Rosary among Christians, by publishing every year since September 1, 1883, an Encyclical Letter on this subject, besides frequently issuing Decrees, as is well known. And now, since God in His merciful Providence has this year again allowed Us to see the approach of the month of October, which We have already consecrated to our Heavenly Queen under the title of the Rosary, We would not refrain from again addressing you; but summarizing in a few words all that we have hitherto done for the promotion of his form of

prayer, We will crown our work by yet a new document, in which Our earnest desire and zeal for this form of devotion to Mary may appear still more clearly, and the fervor of the faithful may be stimulated to the devout and constant use of this pious practice.

3. Impelled, therefore, by a constant desire that Christians should ever be convinced of the efficacy and dignity of the Rosary of Our Lady, We first of all pointed out that the origin of this form of prayer is divine rather than human, showing it to be an admirable garland woven from the Angelic Salutation, together with the Lord's Prayer, joined to meditation, and that this form of prayer was most powerful and particularly efficacious for attaining eternal life. For besides the special excellence of the prayers, it affords a powerful protection to faith and conspicuous models of virtue in the mysteries proposed for contemplation. We showed also how easy the devotion is and how suited to the people, offering an absolutely perfect model of domestic life in meditation on the Holy Family at Nazareth, and that therefore Christendom had never failed to experience its salutary effects.

The Popes and the Rosary

4. For these reasons We have ever repeatedly encouraged the recitation of the Holy Rosary, and have endeavoured to increase its dignity by a more solemn cult, following in this the footsteps of our predecessors. Pope Sixtus V., of happy memory, approved the ancient custom of reciting the Rosary; Gregory XIII. dedicated a day under this title, which Clement VIII. afterwards inscribed in the martyrology, and Clement XI. extended to the Universal Church. Benedict XIII. inserted the feast in the Roman Breviary, and We, ourselves, in perpetual testimony of Our affection for this devotion commanded that the solemnity with its office should be celebrated in the Universal Church as a double of the second class, consecrating to this devotion the entire month of October. Finally we ordered the addition to the Litany of Loreto of the invocation "Queen of the most Holy Rosary," as an augury of victory in our present warfare.

The Value of Indulgences

5. It remains to be added that great value and utility accrue to the Rosary from the abundance of privileges and favours which adorn it, and more particularly from the rich treasures of indulgences attached to it. It is evident how greatly to the advantage of all who are solicitous for their eternal salvation is the obtaining of these benefits. For it is a question of obtaining either totally or partially a remission of the debt of temporal punishment which, even after guilt has been forgiven, must be paid either in this life or in the next. Vast indeed is the treasure won by the merits of Christ, His Mother and the Saints, to which our predecessor Clement VI. so aptly applied those words of the Book of Wisdom: "She is an infinite treasure to men: which they that use become the friends of God" (Wisdom vii., 14).

6. The Roman Pontiffs, making use of that supreme power granted them by God, have opened out the most abundant fountains of these graces to the members of the sodality of the Holy rosary and to those who recite the Rosary.

A Projected "Constitution"

7. Wherefore, believing that the Crown of Mary will shine more brilliantly with these privileges and indulgences, as with an adornment of most precious gems, We have decided upon carrying out what We have long contemplated, namely, the publication of a "Constitution" concerning the rights, privileges and indulgences which are enjoyed by the members of the Rosary Sodality. This Our "Constitution" We intend to be a testimony of Our love to the most august Mother of God, and at the same time an encouragement to all the faithful and a reward of their piety, so that in the last hour of life they may be aided by her assistance and sweetly rest in her embrace. This blessing We heartily invoke from Almighty God through the Queen of the most Holy Rosary, and as an earnest and pledge of Divine Blessings, Venerable Brethren, to your clergy and to the people committed to your care, We gladly impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, on the 5th day of September, 1898, in the 21st year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII